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Response to Dr. Enrico Fermi on UFOs

by Robert Bedrosian

Robert Bedrosian received a Ph.D. from Columbia University's Department of Middle East Languages and Cultures in 1979.

Dear Dr. Fermi:

Please excuse the tardiness of my response. At the time of your death, in 1954, I was a boy of five. When I learned about the question you raised regarding UFOs and extraterrestrials, and by the time I wrote this response, I was an old man. One important discussant here, Charles Fort—the extraordinary investigator of anomalous phenomena—had died already in 1932 (1).

The question you asked has come to be called the Fermi Paradox. It may be paraphrased as follows: "If UFOs and extraterrestrial beings exist, where are they? Why don't they show themselves?"

I have two possible explanations:

1. Aliens may not consider humanity an intelligent species. They may have transitioned to a postbiological reality, one where their artificial intelligence (AI) is eternalized in a robotic framework of some kind. Possibly they have an interest in "intelligence" as it may exist all over the universe, but they do not consider organic life "intelligent." In other words, if they emerged from organic beings as we have, they may not search for anything *except* AI. That leaves humans—with their electricity, radio transmissions, nuclear bombs, and computers—"not quite quite," from the standpoint of non-organic intelligent aliens. Thus, our organic natures (our meatiness, our containers or tents of flesh) may be excluding us from the elite club of genius AI entities. Let's say that the club is "restricted"—organic life not allowed.

For the human species, which prides itself on its superiority over "lesser" life forms, this may take some getting used to. However, I am confident that humans *can* get used to it. After all, we do the same thing to other species living here on planet Earth with us. We live in the midst of myriad species which have some traits similar to ours, although the creatures are smaller: social insects like ants and bees with their hives and divisions of labor; birds with their nest-building and migrations; beavers with their dams, and other animals. Resident on Earth with us are tool-using creatures which can communicate with their own kind. They have been around for tens of millions of years, while we humans have been in our present state for less than 100,000 years.

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While we are used to dismissing the activities of smaller creatures as instinctive, there are also creatures *larger* than us, such as great whales, whose brains are many times larger and more complex than ours. They avoid humans (perhaps a sign of their intelligence), but are known to live in communities and to have audio communication with one another at speeds so fast that we have to greatly slow down recordings of them, just to distinguish that there are separate "words" present. Such communications are somewhat romantically (and dismissively) called "songs." Do the great whales actually have to build libraries and endow chairs at universities before we describe them as "intelligent?"

When humans speak of "intelligence" what they mean is something that is able to communicate with *us*. Humanity is human-centric to the extent that it might not recognize intelligence when it sees it. So far, our experience with the other native, known terrestrial entities strongly suggests this. Just as we regard as instinctive the activities of species inhabiting planet Earth with us, "intelligent" aliens may regard our activities in the same light and completely skip the planet—beyond noting that it is covered with nest-building organic creatures.

This suggests a second possible answer to your question:

2. Since we do not know what to look for, we may miss finding them, and/or be incapable of detecting them. Aliens (in various frameworks, including as artificial intelligence, as organic beings and/or organic projections) may have visited Earth many times in the past. They may also be resident with us currently, and at all times in our past. How would we know? Again, human-centricity is the opaquing curtain, for what if the resident aliens are not interested in "helping" us or having anything to do with us?

In 1919 Charles Fort, who believed that planet Earth *already* was the property of alien entities, put it this way in his memorable prose:

"Would we, if we could, educate and sophisticate pigs, geese, cattle?

Would it be wise to establish diplomatic relation with the hen that now functions, satisfied with mere sense of achievement by way of compensation?" (2)

Fort believed that humans were too dumb to grasp the situation, and that orthodox science delusionally ignored data that did not comport with its own fossilized assumptions.

Dr. Fermi, since the time you raised the question about UFOs, there also have been many close-range observations of strange objects, sometimes by multiple witnesses, sometimes with radar confirmation. Moreover, there have been diverse physical traces connected with some sightings, as well as witnesses who have experienced physical and medical effects.

Consequently, we must observe that the problem, as you stated it, has an undeniable human-centric bias. It assumes that aliens are interested in us as "intelligent" entities, and wish to engage with us. It also implies that there has been no evidence of the possible presence of aliens on Earth.

Respectfully,
Robert Bedrosian

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Notes

(1) The works of Charles H. Fort (1874-1932) are highly recommended. All are available at Internet Archive (archive.org) and are well worth investigating: [Book of the Damned](#) (New York, 1919); [Three Books by Charles Fort](#), in one download [*New Lands* (1923), *Lo!* (1931), and *Wild Talents* (1933)]. These works are collections of data from scientific journals, newspapers and periodicals, loosely categorized by Fort and commented on in his humorous style. Fort is considered the Father of modern UFO studies.

(2) Charles Fort, *Book of the Damned* (New York, 1919), p. 156.

Wikipedia has a wonderful article on the Fermi Paradox, which lists 20 hypothetical explanations for the paradox. One category, that they are "too alien," does not contain the idea that they may not be interested in us or do not consider humans as intelligent life forms. We do not mean to be hurtful toward humanity, but might we suggest a category, that the aliens are "too intelligent?" [Fermi paradox](#), at Wikipedia.

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[Humanutics Series](#), at Internet Archive.